

Ralph Eshelman  
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18 February 2022

Dear Senator Paul Pinsky and Delegate Mary Lehman,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 367 which designates the Patuxent Riverkeeper as a designated member of the Patuxent River Commission. While it would seem logical that this important position would automatically be a member of the Commission, to my surprise I learn this is not the case. This bill will correct this oversight.

I have lived in the Patuxent Watershed on both Mill Creek and Hellen Creek since 1974. From my home, I look out to the Patuxent River. I am the founding director of the Calvert Marine Museum and Patuxent River Appreciations Days (PRAD). I served on the board of the Patuxent Riverkeeper, including co-chair, between 2010 and 2019. I have sat in on several meetings of the Patuxent River Commission and am thus familiar with their work. I am currently working on a comprehensive book on the Patuxent River including a chapter on the environmental issues of the Patuxent. I have boated, kayaked, and canoed many of the tributaries of the river as well as a thirty-mile stretch of the Patuxent River from Queen Anne Landing to Benedict. I have visited every park and hiked most of the trails along the river. I follow the political and scientific accomplishments concerning the river as well as its issues.

I am therefore very aware of the good, the bad, and ugly, of the future of the Patuxent Watershed. I strongly encourage you to include the riverkeeper but I also ask that the watershed manager be included as another key member of the commission. A simple amendment to the current bill can easily make this fix and provide both of these positions a voice to the commission that frankly is much needed.

Additionally, I ask at a later date, a review of the Patuxent River Commission be conducted to ensure the mission of the commission is being carried out as mandated in its original charter. I am most willing to answer any questions you may have regarding these suggestions. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to seeing the amendment and passage of this bill.

Sincerely yours,

***(signature on the original/on file)***

Ralph E. Eshelman  
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